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Subject:	Tester Introduces Legislation to Stop Rule Change That Would Create Uncertainty, Jeopardize Resources for Great Falls, Missoula and Bozeman
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Good Afternoon Friends:

I am reaching out to update you on Senator Tester's work to block the proposed Metropolitan Statistical Area rule change from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that would lead to decreased funding for our community. As you will see below, Senator Tester introduced legislation today that would prevent this rule change from going into effect. This bill builds upon his work on this matter and represents another signal to the Administration that Senator Tester strongly opposes the proposed rule change.

Previously, Senator Tester sent a letter to the Administration calling the decision irresponsible and urging them to reverse course. Just this week, Senator Tester spoke with Acting Director Young at OMB regarding the rule change and made the case for why this rule change would be bad for Montana. He believes this call went well.

Senator Tester and his staff has heard from a number of community leaders on how this rule change would negatively impact Montana. We appreciate that feedback and it has proven useful in conversations with Administration officials.

Please feel free to reach out with additional questions.

U.S. SENATOR FOR MONTANA
JON TESTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tester Introduces Legislation to Stop Rule Change That Would Create Uncertainty, Jeopardize Resources for Great Falls, Missoula, Bozeman

Metropolitan Statistical Area Stabilization Act *would prevent Office of Management and Budget proposed change to city size designation that would impact Great Falls, Missoula, and likely Bozeman*

(U.S. Senate) - U.S. Senator Jon Tester today introduced legislation to prevent a proposed rule change that could significantly alter the amount of federal funding received by Great Falls, Missoula, and likely Bozeman, creating uncertainty for municipal governments in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tester's *Metropolitan Statistical Area Stabilization Act* would prevent the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from implementing the rule change. The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a designation currently used by OMB to refer to geographic areas with a population of at least 50,000 people, and is used by a range of federal agencies and programs to determine funding allocations for a range of federal programs including housing and health care initiatives.

"As Montana works to recover from the pandemic—just as communities are rebuilding their economies and getting back on their feet—is the absolute worst time to force through a bureaucratic change that will take critical funding away," Tester said. **"My bill will prevent OMB from implementing this shortsighted decision, and help ensure Montana towns have the resources they need to create jobs and bounce back from this crisis."**

Tester has been a vocal critic of the proposed change. Last month in a letter to Acting OMB Director Robert S. Fairweather Tester called the decision "irresponsible" and urged OMB to reverse its decision.

In January, OMB proposed to change the population threshold of the MSA to 100,000 people, which would impact 144 communities across the country including Great Falls and Missoula. In addition, this could impact Bozeman, which is estimated to cross the 50,000 threshold under the 2020 Census data. Because of the lack of centralized information about which programs use MSA, there is no way to know what effect such a change would have on Montana communities during a global public health and economic crisis.

For example, the Medicare Hospital Wage Index and Ambulance Fee Schedule published annually as well as Medicare's graduate medical education payments are guided specifically by the MSA definition. However, because each program has its own funding formula, there is no database to find out which agencies use MSA and which do not.

Text of Tester's *Metropolitan Statistical Area Stabilization Act* is available **HERE**.

Best wishes to you on this lovely day!

Deborah

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